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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5276  
INFO RUEHXK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 001098

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA; NSC FOR SHAPIRO/KUMAR; JOINT STAFF FOR LTGEN SELVA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/29/2019

TAGS: PGOV KPAL KWBG PBTS PREL

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON SETTLEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

REF: JERUSALEM 966

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. Israeli NGO contacts briefed PolOff on several West Bank settlement infrastructure projects. Projects include a wastewater pipeline to serve Ariel settlement, a wastewater purification plant in Ofra settlement, a road between Geva'ot and Beitar Illit settlements, and access roads for a new Jerusalem-Tel Aviv railway near the town of Beit Iksa. End summary.

Land confiscation underway  
for Ariel wastewater pipeline

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¶2. (C) Israeli NGO B'Tselem researcher Eyal Hareuveni told PolOff June 24 that the Israeli Civil Administration has begun to distribute land confiscation orders to Palestinians in Salfit district in preparation for the construction of a wastewater pipeline from Ariel settlement into Israel, a distance of at least 10 miles. (Note: The Mayor of Salfit told the Consul General June 8 that the town suffers from seepage of untreated wastewater from Ariel settlement and Barkan Industrial Zone (reftel). End note). Hareuveni said that the pipeline project, initiated by the Israeli Ministry of Environment and Ariel Municipality, is estimated to cost NIS 70 million and would likely be financed by the GOI and Ariel Municipality.

Palestinian petition against Ofra wastewater  
purification plant on private land

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¶3. (C) Dror Etkes of Israeli NGO Yesh Din told PolOff on June 24 that construction of a wastewater purification plant to serve Ofra settlement remains frozen following a stop-work order issued in 2008. Two Palestinian individuals, represented by Yesh Din, submitted a petition claiming that the wastewater purification plant had been constructed on private Palestinian land and calling for the facility to be dismantled. Etkes opined that settlers and other settlement bodies are "undoubtedly" attempting to retroactively purchase the land, which belongs to four Palestinian families. He expressed skepticism that the partially-constructed facility would be demolished.

Seizure orders issued for Road

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¶4. (C) Etkes informed PolOff June 25 that two land seizure orders have been issued to enable the construction of a road between Geva'ot and Beitar Illit settlements west of

Bethlehem. The orders call for the seizure of 12.3 dunums (roughly 3 acres) of land, which Etkes said belongs to nearby Nahalin village. (Comment: "Settler roads" are often lined with fencing, which may make land on the west side of the road inaccessible to Nahalin residents. End Comment.)

Jerusalem-Tel Aviv railway  
to cut across West Bank

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¶5. (C) Palestinian press reported June 23 plans for a new Jerusalem-Tel Aviv railway that will cut through the West Bank. Hagit Ofran of Peace Now confirmed to PolOff June 24 that Peace Now submitted an objection to the railway plans. Ofran explained that the proposed path of the railway access roads cut through Palestinian land near the town of Beit Iksa.  
WALLES